Patterns of online seeking and providing help among adolescents: a preliminary study

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## Sample

The participants were 545 adolescents, The participants’ mean age was 16.4

## Implications For Educators About

Other

# Abstract

We proposed a typology of adolescents’ online support-related behaviours based on two facets: help-seeking and help-providing: (1) Transceivers seek and provide help; (2) Receivers seek help but do not
provide it; (3) Transmitters provide help, yet do not seek it; and (4) Idlers refrain from seeking and providing help. Of the 528 adolescents, the largest group are Transceivers (45%), and they seek help mainly from
peers through social networking sites, around social issues. For Receivers (5%) the most important facilitator of seeking help is anonymity. Transmitters (16%) refrain from seeking help due to self-reliance.
Idlers (34%) refrain from seeking help due to their preference to face-to-face encounters. The characteristics of the four patterns are discussed in light of counselling implications.

# Outcome

Findings revealed that Transceivers – adolescents who both seek and provide online help – are
the largest group (45%) in the current study, having a more prominent representation of girls
(65%) (Lipshits-Braziler, Amram-Vaknin, Pesin-Michael Tatar, 2020). Adolescents of this classification seek help mainly around social difficulties, and they turn to peers who are both known and unknown to them. In addition, their preferred way to seek and provide help is through social network sites. Receivers report turning to adult professionals, whether known offline or not, more than to family members. It appears, therefore, that Receivers can decrease their reliance on parents and increase their autonomy by seeking unmediated professional help online. It might be, that online communication enables maintaining anonymity and, therefore, it can reduce well-known barriers (concerns about privacy, hesitancy to reveal personal details, and stigma) and encourage Receivers to seek professional help. Transmitters, those providing but not seeking online help, represent 16% of the adolescents in this study, with a slightly greater representation of boys (52%). Idlers, neither seeking nor providing online help to others, represent 34% of the adolescents in this study. They refrain from seeking help online, mainly due to their preference to seek help face to face and due to their lack of trust in the Internet or those using it. It appears, therefore, that
Idlers do not relate to the Internet as a channel for seeking help. Finally, the findings showed that
the gender gap in seeking help is manifested online, with girls seeking more help online than boys